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H – 1043

International Court of Justice

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Take 4 Page 1
9 July 1530-1700
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H1043 - 0002

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

9 JULY 1946

COMMISSIONER:

Mr. I. D. McILWRAITH

THE SA

(The Commission reconvened at 1547 hours.)

COMMISSIONER: Dr. Loeffler, are you examining this witness?

DR. LOEFFLER: I will begin.

COMMISSIONER: Very well. (To the witness). Will you stand and raise your right hand and say after me:

VON DER BORCH, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

COMMISSIONER: I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath.)

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Q. [redacted]: What is your full name?

A. Karl Otto von der Borch.

[redacted]

BY DR. LOEFFLER: (Defense Counsel for the SA).

Q. The Defense has asked permission to hear the witness von der Borch with reference to the defense of the NS Reiterkorps attached to the SA, ~~and~~ nid is also charged by the prosecution. Dr. Walle was previously heard as a witness for the SA Reiterkorps. In his capacity as Unterfuhrer he has testified for the

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urban part of the Reiterkorps. The witness, in his capacity as a higher leader, is called to be heard on the rural part of the Reiterkorps. I will now put the questions to him. Witness, what was your position in the NS Reiterkorps?

A. I was Group Reiter Province Leader.

Q. Is it correct that as a Group Reiter Province Leader you had a higher position and were subordinate directly to the Chief of the Reiterkorps?

A. Yes, that is correct. I was subordinate directly to the Chief of the Reiterkorps.

Q. Was your position as Group Reiter Leader an honorary one or was it full time paid employment?

A. I did not receive any salary. It was not a full time function. I was honorary.

Q. In which province did you lead the Reiter Korps?

A. I have lead the Reiter Group in the Group Bavarian East Ostmark.

Q. Were you able to observe other large groups besides your own?

A. During the meeting of the Group Reiter Leaders I had an opportunity to observe other groups. I was also a judge in the Reiter competitions.

Q. If I understand you, you believe yourself to be competent to give us a correct judgment on the general situation within the NS Reiterkorps?

A. I believe I can do so.

Q. I now want to question you regarding the origin of the Reiterkorps. Witness, is it correct that the Reiterkorps did not originate from the Storm Detachments of Adolph Hitler?

A. Yes, that is correct.

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Q. Is it correct that the Reiterkorps originated by transferring the urban and rural Reiter Associations into the SA?

A. Yes, that is correct.

Q. Do you know anything about these associations, when they were transferred, having received a promise that they would be able to remain independent and atonomous associations with tasks pertaining to sports?

A. We received that assurance.

Q. Was this promise kept consequently?

A. Yes it was kept.

Q. Did the Reiter Associations have a ~~free~~ Free choice in the matter of being transferred or was a transfer accomplished by a general directive eminating from higher authorities?

A. The transfer was accomplished by decrees issued by higher authorities.

Q. Do you know that this was a common directive based on the supreme SA Leadership and ~~directive~~ emanating from the Chief of the Rural Reiter Associations by order of the Ministery of the Interior?

A. A conference had taken place between the Chief of the Reiterkorps in Germany ~~by the name of~~ [redacted] and the Chief of Staff of the SA and the Ministery of the Interior.

Q. Is it correct that these 2 authorities who were competent for the Reiterkorps in Germany ~~were~~ issued the transfer directives?

A. The leader of the Rural Reiterkorps and Reiter Associations received the order to execute this transfer.

Q. Did you know that the associations were threatened with dissolution if they refused to be transferred?

A. I know it.

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Q. Do you know of any such dissolutions having taken place?

A. I do know of the dissolution of two associations within a different group who had refused to obey this directive.

Q. Was it not very bad for the keeping of horses in rural areas if such associations were dissolved?

A. For the farmers and owners, particularly for the breeders it was very, very bad if such an association was dissolved.

Q. A leader of a Rural Reiterkorps Association, if he refused to obey this order, would he have had to be afraid to be considered a sabateur and eventually might he even have had to fear being thrown into a concentration camp?

A. I would not have dared to refuse such a transfer because I would have been considered an enemy of the State and would have had to fear being thrown into a concentration camp.

Q. Witness Dr. Walle has stated already that the transfer of the Reiter Associations took place by simply declaring the Reiter Associations as SA Storms.

A. This statement by Dr. Walle is correct.

Q. In regard to this transfer, did membership in the party play any part?

A. Membership in the party had no part in this transfer. I myself, had not been a party member for many years.

Q. Is it correct that appointment to Group Reiterkorps Leader for an entire province was possible for a non-member of the Party?

A. That is correct.

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Q. I now turn to the next point. How did it happen and how can you explain the fact that of the three Sports organizations of the Party, that is, the National Socialists Automobile Corps, the National Socialistxs Aviation Corps and the National Socialists Reiterkorps, it was only the last one that did not achieve complete independence of the SA?

A. The Leader of the Reiterkorps by the name of Litzmann, was not the personality to take ~~in ac~~ the Reiterkorps out of the SA and make it an independent organization, as for instance, was the case with the National Socialists Automobile Corps.

Q. May it be possible that it is due to the lack of political influence with Hitler?

A. Litzmann had no political position toward Hitler as was the case with Huehnlein who had taken the Automobile Corps out of the SA.

A. Are your statements based on a personal knowledge of the position and the person of Litzmann?

A. Yes, it is based on my personal knowledge.

Q. I now turn to a new point, the size and composition of the Reiterkorps.

MR. MARRECO: We have had all this evidence before and we don't challenge it.

DR. LOEFFLER: I will make it as brief as I possibly can. I just want a high leader to confirm what a sub-leader has said. The witness Dr. Walle stated that at the time of the transfer the Reiterkorps had about 100,000 members and that for the ensuing period another 100,000 were had, so that the total amounted to 200,000 members.

A. I believe that statement is correct.

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Q. Is it correct that the membership consisted 80 per cent of farmers and in those areas which were pronouncedly horse-breeding areas it even amounted to 95%?

A. It is correct. There were 80% farmers and in horse breeding areas anywhere from 95 to 100 per cent.

Q. I now have one question regarding the activities of the Reiterkorps. Is it correct that the Reiterkorps has refrained from any political activities, concentrating on horse sports and horse breeding.

A. The Reiterkorps has refrained from any political activities. It has busied itself exclusively to such things as training riders and grooms.

Q. Did the members of the NS Reiterkorps consider themselves more as A-Men or horse breeders?

A. The members of the Reiterkorps considered themselves only horseback riders.

Q. The Witness Dr. Wolle stated that there never was any political propaganda in the Reiterkorps. Is that true also of the leadership of the Reiterkorps?

A. The Reiterkorps did not do any political propaganda.

Q. Were any ~~ideolitical~~ ideological and political lectures given at the meeting of the leaders of the Reiterkorps?

A. At the meeting of the leaders, no ~~ideolitical~~ ideological or political matters were discussed, merely professional matters, that is to say, riding and driving matters.

Q. Were the leaders of the Reiterkorps sent to political leader schools or were they sent to professional rider schools?

A. The riders in the different provinces were sent to rider training schools in such provinces or they were sent to the Reiter riding leader schools in Berlin.

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Q. I am now turning to a new chapter which is the participation ~~on~~ in the crimes against peace. On the basis of your knowledge of the matter, has the Reiterkorps participated ~~on~~ in the preparation of an agressive war?

A. The NS Reiterkorps has not participated ~~on~~ in any ~~participation~~ preparation for an aggressive war.

Q. You have testified that 80 to 100 percent of the members of the NS Reiterkorps were farmers. What was the attitude of the farmers toward war?

A. Every farmer, and I myself am a farmer, wants peace because he needs peace in order to be able to pursue his agricultural activity properly.

Q. Were you able to observe that within the NS Reiterkorps a militaristic spirit was promoted systematically?

A. No militaristic spirit of any kind was promoted in the Reiterkorps.

Q. The Prosecution charges that it was a task of the NS Reiterkorps to issue replacements for the mounted units of the Wehrmacht. Is that correct?

A. Every expert knows that it is impossible to use plow horses with insufficient saddle and bridle in order to train people for the soldiering.

Q. Isn't it correct that the Wehrmacht had its own training system for its replacements?

A. The Wehrmacht trained its own people and did not care at all to have any pre-military training done to their people because all it had to do was to correct the errors.

Q. Is it correct that the Wehrmacht only in rare cases paid any attention to the riding certificate (Reiterschein)?

A. The riding certificate merely certified to having concluded a certain part of the training. It had been promised that owners of the certificate would have preference in being assigned by the Wehrmacht to a mounted or horse-drawn unit,

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however, no use was made of it.

Q. Was the reason for the riding certificate to be found in the matter of the Wehrmacht for mounted replacements or was it merely that the owner of such a certificate, once ~~they~~ he came to the Wehrmacht, obviously wanted to be assigned to mounted units?

A. Just as a good skier wanted to serve with the mountain troops where he could use his knowledge, ~~man who was a member of the SS wanted to show his knowledge and wanted to serve with a group where he could use that knowledge, that is to say, the mounted troops are the same way that~~ a technician ~~a~~ wished to be assigned to a Signal Corps, so a man who liked horses would also prefer being assigned to a mounted unit.

Q. Did the Wehrmacht ever have any training courses for the Reiterkorps?

A. I don't know of any such course.

Q. At the beginning of the war, any where or at any time, was any complete unit of the Reiterkorps ever ~~permitted~~ committed into the Wehrmacht?

A. I don't know anything of such a commitment and I am certain it never took place.

Q. Did the Reiterkorps have any strategical and tactical training in the sense of it being a corps preparatory to the Wehrmacht cavalry?

A. Any training for the cavalry never took place with us and this did not take place with us because of the lack of proper material.

Q. On the basis of your knowledge, did the NS Reiterkorps ever have anything to do with the ~~NS~~ Wehrmannschaften?

A. On the basis of my knowledge, the NS Reiterkorps has had nothing to do with the Wehrmannschaften.

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Q. Are you aware of articles having appeared in the SA Mann and SA Fuehrer which gave a complete misrepresentation of the real situation in the NS Reiterkorps and how can you explain it?

A. I first want to say that neither one of these publications, the SA Mann and SA Fuehrer were read in the NS Reiterkorps. I know only of the two articles that you have shown me now.

COMMISSIONER: But he hasn't shown you any articles.

MR. MARRECO: These two articles are in evidence before the Commission. ~~There~~ They are two articles which I put to the previous witness. I would point out that all of this evidence is really cumulative and all has been gone over with another witness and this is, in effect, another re-examination.

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q. On the basis of your knowledge as a high leader of the NS Reiterkorps, I want to ask you whether these articles have any authoritative or semi-official character or whether they were private views.

Q. They had no authoritative official character. It seems to me that they were put into that paper by a layman who put them in, in order to arouse a discussion.

COMMISSIONER: I would like to get on the record what articles we are talking about.

MR. MARRECO: D-913 and D-914.

Commissioner: I am much obliged to you.

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q. Can you declare here, according to your best knowledge and with a clear conscience that the situation as described in these articles does not correspond to the actual situation as it was found in the NS Reiterkorps?

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A. The description of these articles does not in any way correspond to the actual facts. The content for an expert appears ridiculous.

COMMISSIONER: When did you see these articles?

BY THE WITNESS:

A. I saw them the day before yesterday.

Q. As a leader of the NS Reiterkorps, were you ever entrusted with secret military matters?

A. I never was entrusted with secret military matters.

Q. You mean in your capacity as Group Reiterkorps Leader, because I want to point out here that during war time you were a soldier?

A. Yes, of course.

MR. MARRECO: It is a quarter to five. I hope Dr. Loeffler is going to give me time to cross-examine before we adjourn.

DR. LOEFFLER: I will be through soon.

COMMISSIONER: Have you many more questions?

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q. One or two. Witness, have you ever been given the impression that the general SA was a criminal organization as maintained by the Prosecution?

A. I have never had that impression.

Q. But you know that excesses have been committed by the general SA. In your opinion did the leadership of the SA approve or disapprove of such excesses? We speak here of the time after 1933.

A. Such excesses seem possible to me in such an organization of millions; however, the SA leadership has put them under sentence and penalized them.

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DR. LOEFFLER: No further questions.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. MARRECO:

Q. Can you tell me if Litzmann is still alive?

A. I don't know.

Q. What age was he?

A. I should say in his late 40's.

Q. Was he a professional soldier?

A. As far as I know, he was a professional soldier during the World War.

Q. Was he a professional cavalryman?

A. Yes, I believe he was in the Cavalry.

Q. Was he a member of the SA before 1933?

A. I don't know. I don't believe so.

Q. Why was Litzmann chosen to take charge of the NS Reiterkorps when it was incorporated into the SA?

A. I believe that Litzmann was chosen because he was the son of General Litzmann, a well known National Socialist.

Q. So Litzmann was chosen because he was an expert in cavalry training and the son of a prominent National Socialist?

A. In no case was he picked out because he was a cavalry expert. He was a horse breeder in East Prussia.

Q. You spoke of cart horses with insufficient bridles and saddles. Did you and your friends ride cart horses with insufficient bridles and saddles.

A. My rider storms all had to ride on insufficient horses and with insufficient bridles and saddles.

Q. But I take it that you ARE A country gentlemen of some means. Surely you are not telling this Commission that you generally mount yourself on cart horses with inadequate saddles?

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A. The leaders themselves who had horses at their disposal, as for instance, myself as a horse breeder, usually had better horses.

Q. Generally, as a unit, I take it the NS Reiterkorps took a horseman's pride in its turn-out?

A. There was, however, a lack of money and means to equip the horses in such a way as to have been enjoyed by the farmer boys.

Q. Have you seen the photographs of the NS Reiterkorps' activities which the Defense Counsel has put into evidence?

A. I saw some of them.

Q. Those photographs show extremely good looking horses jumping in competitions and they show members of the NS Reiterkorps going hunting. In view of those photographs, isn't it rather nonsense to talk about the Reiterkorps mounted on cart horses with insufficient bridles and saddles?

A. By far the largest part of our members had ~~plow~~ plough horses, however, we did have sportsmen who ~~take~~ took part in competitions and also had the necessary horse material.

Q. What would you say was the total strength of the NS Reiterkorps in Germany in general?

A. 200,000 at the largest.

Q. We heard about 90% of the members owned their own horses. Will you agree with that estimate?

A. No, we did not have so many horses. It depended upon the areas, as it differed. Of course, in horse breeding areas there were more horses available than in those areas where there was not so much horse breeding.

Q. What would you put the percentage at throughout Germany?

A. It is very difficult to answer because it differs too much in the different areas.

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Q. A credible witness has told us it was as high as 90% of horses owned.

A. I believe this estimate is too high.

DR. LOEFFLER: Perhaps it will help to clarify the situation if you state the witness comes from Traminy which is definitely a horse breeding area.

BY MR. MARRECO:

Q. Whether it was 90 per cent or not, members of the NS Reiterkorps owned about 150,000 horses.

A. Since I am under oath I do not care to answer this question at this time.

Q. In order to mount 200,000 men you would have to have at least 150,000 horses.

A. In the first place we could only ride on Sundays since during the week the horses were ploughing and during harvest time we could not ride at all.

Q. Now look here witness. You know as well as I do one doesn't on a Sunday ride a cart horse that has been ploughing all week. You can't expect us to believe that the Reiterkorps was mounted on cart horses.

A. I regret to be able to testify under oath only to the fact.

Q. What happened to all the Reiterkorps horses at the out-break of the war.

A. There were very few Reiterkorps horses proper, and the horses of the farmers partly were used, and partly they were drafted into the Wehrmacht.

Q. You know, witness, this evidence is very contradictory to previous evidence that this Commission has heard. I just want to ask you about the articles in SA Fuehrer. Would it surprise you to hear that the editor of the SA Fuehrer has told this Commission that these articles were widely read by members of the Reiterkorps and They appeared to provoke just those discussions and correspondence among the Reiterkorps members that they were intended to provoke?

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A. I readily believe that the author of the articles wanted to provoke a discussion but neither the SA Mannwer the SA Fuehrer was ~~/~~ widely read in the Reiterkorps.

Q. The editor of the SA Fuehrer has told us that when these articles appeared, he received many letters from members of the Reiterkorps not protesting that they were a complete misrepresentation of Reiterkorps activities but joining in a general discussion of the ideas put forward in the articles.

A. It is quite possible that individual members of the Reiterkorps have read these articles and wrote to the editor about them. However, in my group it wasn't read very much and I myself and my group have not read all of these articles.

Q. Just listen to the last words of the last article: "And another thing, our men are later to become wide-awake, ingenius, useful soldiers. and the more independance to think and act they already bring with them, the more pleased the Armed Forces will be to see them, and the greater will be the esteem in which the Armed Forces hold the SA. By working along these lines we are therefore also working for a great and glorious SA".

COMMISSIONER: It is after five o'clock.

~~ANTHONY~~ Mr. MARRECO: I have one more question.

COMMISSIONER: We will let you finish ~~the sentence~~ them.

~~BY.....~~ ~~ANTHONY~~ Mr. MARRECO: Q: If these articles and these words did give a true picture of the SA Reiterkorps activities, it would undoubtedly show ~~be~~, would it not, ~~that~~ that the Reiterkorps was engaged in pre-military training?

A. Both of these articles contained such utter nonsense that one cannot take them seriously. I can only say that the facts are completely misrepresented in these articles.

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Q. That is not quite the answer to my question. My question was, if these articles were a true representation of Reiterkorps activities, and it may well be that the prosecution can prove that they were, then without doubt, the Reiterkorps was a pre-military training organization?

DR. LOEFFLER: I object to this question. The witness stated clearly that these articles are utter nonsense. Further, he had stated that these articles had nothing to do with the facts as they were. Consequently, I consider this question non-permissible ~~xxxxxxxx~~ which asks, if these reports were correct, what would be the case?

~~ANTHONY~~ Mr. MARRECO: I think it is sir, quite unnecessary for Dr. Loeffler to make a speech in the middle of my cross-examination. If the witness does not want to answer my question it is perfectly all right.

COMMISSIONER: Dr. Loeffler has the right to object to a question. I think this question is perfectly permissible. It can be answered "yes" or "no". It is the same as saying if that table is ~~round~~ brown do you agree that it cannot be green? Now will you answer the question "yes"or "no"?

BY THE WITNESS:

A. May I ask the question to be repeated?

COMMISSIONER: I will ask the question. The question was, if the articles had been true, would it prove that the Reiterkorps was a pre-military training ~~program~~ establishment? It is easy to answer "yes" or "no".

BY THE WITNESS:

A: Then I cannot consider it true.

COMMISSIONER: I am not asking you whether it is true. I am asking you, if it is true, ~~if it~~ whether that proves as the prosecution say that it was a pre-military training school?

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BY THE WITNESS:

A. ~~If~~ Even then, it would have been no pre-military training organization.

COMMISSIONER: Very well, that is the answer. Is there any more cross-examination by the Russian prosecution?

~~DR. MORLOV~~ Col. Karev: No.

COMMISSIONER: Is there any re-examination by ~~the~~ Defense Counsel?

BY DR. LOEFFLER: I only have one question and one statement. I want to say that the pictures which the prosecution referred to emanated ~~with~~ from urban Reiter Associations. They were actually jumpers and horses for competitions but we have heard that 80 to 90 per cent of the Reiterkorps were not urban but rural farmers.

~~ANTHONY~~ Ms. MARRECO: I Am I entitled to state that some of these pictures showed some of the Reiterkorps fox hunting, which they couldn't do in town?

BY DR. LOEFFLER: May I ask the witness whether they were particularly the urban Reiter Associations who had at least one or two hunts ~~at least~~ annually?

A. The urban Reiter Associations rode to hunt every fall.

Q. This is my last question. Taking into consideration the way in which propaganda articles were published during the 12 years of the Nazi regime in Germany, about all athletic activities as for instance football, swimming, boxing, tennis, etc. would one not be justified in saying that these articles contained something like: "This sport ~~xxx~~ also produces new and cleverer soldiers for the Fuehrer!" What I want~~ed~~ to ask is, weren't such articles published and didn't ~~anyone~~ more think of protesting against these articles because they were too silly and too ridiculous?

A. I think the same thing is true no matter whether you talk of any other sport or just the horseback riding.

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COMMISSIONER: The witness didn't quite understand the question.

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q. Isn't it correct that no one thought it worthwhile to protest against such articles because we in Germany knew they were only silly propaganda articles which did not make it worthwhile to object to them?

A. That is so.

Q. No further questions.

COMMISSIONER: The witness may retire. We will meet tomorrow morning at 1000 hours.

(The Commission adjourned at 1715 hours)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of KARL OTTO VON DER B ORCH, taken on 9 July 1946.

Marjorie L Shumway
Reporter (pp. 1-18 ✓)

CERTIFIED TO:

I.D. McGilvray
Commissioner

H1043 - 0020

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

9 July 1946

COMMISSIONER:

Mr. I. D. McILWRAITH

THE SA

(The Commission reconvened at 1547 hours)

COMMISSIONER: Dr. Loeffler, are you examining this witness?

DR. LOEFFLER: I will begin.

COMMISSIONER: Very well. (To the witness). Will you stand and raise your right hand and say after me:

VON DER BORCH, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

COMMISSIONER: I swear by God the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath)

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Q What is your full name?

A Karl Otto von der Borch.

BY DR. LOEFFLER: (Defense Counsel for the SA)

Q. The Defense has asked permission to hear the witness von der Borch with reference to the defense of the NS Reiterkorps attached to the SA, which is also charged by the prosecution. Dr. Walle was previously heard as a witness for the SA Reitherkorps. In his capacity as Unterfuehrer he has testified for the urban part of the Reiterkorps. The witness, in his capacity, as a higher Leader, is called to be heard on the rural part of the Reiterkorps. I will now put the questions to him. Witness, whatwas your position in the NS Reiterkorps?

A I was Group Reiter Province Leader.

Q. Is it correct that as a Group Reiter Province Leader you had a high position and weresubordinate directly to the Chief of the Reiterkorps?

A Yes, that is correct. I was subordinate directly to the Chief of the Reiterkorps.

Q Was your position as Group Reiter Leader anhonorary one or was it full time paid employment?

A Idid not receive any salary. It was not a full time function. I was honorary.

Q In which province did you lead the Reiterkorps?

A I have lead the Reiter Group in the Group Bavarian East Ostmark.

Q Were you able to observe other large groups besides your own?

A During the meeting of the Group Reiter Leaders I had an opportunity to observe tther groups. I was also a judge in the Reiter competitions.

Q If I understand you, you believe yourself to be competent to give us a correct judgment on the general situation within the NS Reiterkorps?

A I believe I can do so.

Q I now want to question you regarding the origin of the Reiterkorps. Witness, is it correct that the Reiterkorps did not originate from the Storm Detachments of Adolf Hitler?

A Yes, that is correct.

Q Is it correct that the Reiterkorps originated by transferring the urban and rural Reiter Associations into the SA?

A Yes, that is correct.

Q Do you know anything about these associations, when they were transferred, having received a promise that they would be able to remain independent and anonomous associati ns with tasks pertaining to sports?

A We received that assurance.

Q Was this promise kept consequently?

A Yes, it was kept.

Q Did the Reiter Associations have a free choice in the matter of being transferred or was a transfer accomplished by a general directive emanating from higher authorities?

A The transfer was accomplished by decrees issued by higher authorities.

Q Do you know that this was a common directive based on the supreme SA Leadership and emanating from the Chief of the Rural Reiter Associations by order of the Ministry of the Interior?

A A conference had taken place between the Chief of the Reiterkorps in Germany and the Chief of Staff of the SA and the Ministry of the Interior.

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Q Is it correct that these 2 authorities were competent for the Reiterkorps in Germany issued the transfer directives?

A The leader of the Rural Reiterkorps and Reiter Associations received the order to execute this transfer.

Q Did you know the associations were threatened with dissolution if they refused to be transferred?

A I know it.

Q Do you know of any subh dissolutions having taken place?

A I do know of the dissolution of two associations within a different group who had refused to obey this directive.

Q Was it not very bad for the keeping of horses in rural areas if such associations were dissolved.

A For the farmers and owners, particularly for the breeders it was very, very bad if such an association was dissolved.

Q A leader of a Rural Reiterkorps Association, if he refused to obey this order, wouldhe have had to beafraid to be considered a sabatuer and eventually might he even had to fear being thrown into a concentration camp?

A I would not have dared to refuse such a transfer because I would have been considered an enemy of the state and would have had no fear being thrown into a concentration camp.

Q Witness, Dr. Walle has stated already that the transfer of the ReiterrAssociations took place by simply declaring the Reiter Associations as SA Storms.

A This statemant by Dr. Walle is correct.

Q In regard to this transfer, did membership in the party play any part?

A Membership in the party had no part in this transfer. I myself, had not been a party member for many years.

Q Is it corredt that appointment to Group Reiterkorps Leaders for an entire province was possible for a non-member of the Party?

A That is correct.

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H1043 – 0023

Q I now turn to the next point. How did it happen and how can you explain the fact that of the three sports organizations of the Party, that is, the National Socialists Automobile Corps, the National Socialists Aviation Corps and the National Socialists Reiterkorps, it was only the last one that did not achieve complete independence of the SA?

A The Leader of the Reiterkorps by the name of Litzmann was not the personality to take the Reiterkorps out of the SA and make it an independent organization, as for instance, was the case with the National Socialists Automobile Corps.

Q May it be possible that it is due to the lack of political influence with Hitler?

A Litzmann had no political position toward Hitler as was the case with Huehnlein who had taken the Automobile Corps out of the SA.

Q Are your statements based on a personal knowledge of the position and the person of Litzmann?

A Yes, it is based on my personal knowledge.

Q I now turn to a new point, the size and composition of the Reiterkorps.

MR. MARRECO: We have had all this evidence before and we don't challenge it.

DR. LOEFFLER: I will make it as brief as I possibly can. I just want a high leader to confirm what a sub-leader has said. The witness Dr. Walle stated that at the time of the transfer the Reiterkorps had about 100,000 members and for the ensuing period another 100,000 were had, so that the total amounted to 200,000 members.

A I believe that statement is correct.

Q Is it correct that the membership consisted 80 per cent of farmers and in those areas which were pronouncedly horse-breeding areas, it even amounted to 95 per cent?

A It is correct. There were 80 per cent farmers and in horse breeding areas anywhere from 95 to 100 per cent.

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Q I now have one question regarding the activities of the Reiterkorps. Is it correct that the Reiterkorps has refrained from any political activities, concentrating on horse sports and horse breeding.

A The Reiterkorps has refrained from any political activities. It has busied itself exclusively to such things as training riders and grooms.

Q Did the members of the NS Reiterkorps consider themselve more as A-Men or horse breeders?

A The members of the Reiterkorps considered themselves only horseback riders.

Q The Witness Dr. Wolle stated that there never was any political propaganda in the Reiterkorps. Is that true also of the leadership of the Reiterkorps?

A The Reiterkorps did not do any political propaganda.

Q Were any ideological and political lectures given at the meeting of the leaders of the Reiterkorps?

A At the meeting of the leaders, no ideological or political matters were discussed, merely professional matters, that is to say, riding and driving matters.

Q Were the leaders of the Reiterkorps sent to political leader schools or were they sent to professional rider schools?

A The riders in the different provinces were sent to rider training schools in such provinces or they were sent to the Reiter riding leader schools in Berlin.

Q I now have a very brief question pertaining to the crimes against humanity. Do you know of any case where within your own or within other groups where a member of the Reiterkorps permitted himself excesses against Jews?

A I do not know of any case.

Q Do you know of any excesses against churches?

A I do not know of any such cases, as members of the Reiterkorps were mostly farmers and they were very religious.

COMMISSIONER: Will you ask the question, "Whether he knows

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of any action against the Jews and the churches", instead of excesses?

BY THE WITNESS:

A I don't know of any action.

BY DR. Loeffler:

Q Wasn't it so, that especially where members of the Reiterkorps were concerned, who were mostly farmers, the relationship was a very close and free one?

A In strictly Catholic areas, the relationship was a particularly good one. I know of a place called Vilzbiborg where the Reiterkorps took part in the Sankt Leonardi ride and there the Catholic minister even blessed their horses.

Q The party had to have conferences with the leaders of its individual organizations monthly. Have you ever been asked to attend such a conference?

A I have never been asked to attend such a conference.

Q Have you ever heard of any action by a member of the Reiterkorps which brought an individual into a concentration camp?

A I don't know of a single such case.

Q I am now turning to a new chapter which is the participation in the crimes against peace. On the basis of your knowledge of the matter, has the Reiterkorps participated in the preparation of an agressive war?

A The NS Reiterkorps has not participated in any preparation for an aggressive war.

Q You have testified that 80 to 100 per cent of the members of the NS Reiterkorps were farmers. What was the attitude of the farmers toward war?

A Every farmer, and I myself am a farmer, wants peace because he needs peace in order to be able to pursue his agricultural activity properly.

Q Were you able to observe that within the NS Reiterkorps a militaristic spirit was promoted systematically?

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A No militaristic spirit of any kind was promoted in the Reiterkorps.

Q The Prosecution charges that it was a task of the NS Reiterkorps to issue replacements for the mounted units of the Wehrmacht. Is that correct?

A Every expert knows that it is impossible to use plow horses with insufficient saddle and bridle in order to train peopl for the soldiering.

Q Isn't it correct that the Wehrmacht had its own training system for its replacements?

A The Wehrmacht trained its own people and did not care at all to have any pre-military training done to their people because all it had to do was to correct the errors.

Q Is it correct that the Wehrmacht only in rare cases paid any attention to the riding certificate (Reiterschein)?

A The riding certificate merely certified to having concluded a certain part of the training. It had been promised that owners of the certificate would have preference in being assigned by the Wehrmacht to a mounted or horse-drawn unit,

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however, no use was made of it.

Q. Was the reason for the riding certificate to be found in the matter of the Wehrmacht for mounted replacements, or was it merely that the owner of such a certificate, once he came to the Wehrmacht, obviously wanted to be assigned to mounted units?

A. Just as a good skier wanted to serve with the mountain troops where he could use his knowledge, and the same way a technician wished to be assigned to a Signal Corps, so a man who liked horses would also prefer being assigned to a mounted unit.

Q. Did the Wehrmacht ever have any training courses for the Reiterkorps?

A. I don't know of any such course.

Q. At the beginning of the war, anywhere or at any time, was any complete unit of the Reiterkorps ever committed into the Wehrmacht?

A. I don't know anything of such a commitment and I am certain it never took place.

Q. Did the Reiterkorps have any strategical and tactical training in the sense of it being a corps preparatory to the Wehrmacht cavalry?

A. Any training for the cavalry never took place with us and this did not take place with us because of the lack of proper material.

Q. On the basis of your knowledge, did the NS Reiterkorps ever have anything to do with the Wehrmannschaften?

A. On the basis of my knowledge, the NS Reiterkorps had had nothing to do with the Wehrmannschaften.

Q. Are you aware of articles having appeared in the SA Mann and SA Fuhrer which gave a complete misrepresentation of the real situation in the NS Reiterkorps and how can you explain it?

A. I first want to say that neither one of these publications, the SA Mann and SA Fuhrer were read in the NS Reiterkorps. I know only of the two articles that you have shown me now.

COMMISSIONER: But he hasn't shown you any articles.

MR. MARRECO: These two articles are in evidence before the Commission They are two articles which I put to the previous witness. I would point

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out that all of this evidence is really cumulative and all has been gone over with another witness, and this is, in effect, another re-examination.

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q. On the basis of your knowledge as a high leader of the NS Reiterkorps, I want to ask you whether these articles have any authoratative or semi-official character, or whether they were private views.

A. They had no authoratative official character. It seems to me that they were put into that paper by a layman who put them in, in order to arouse a discussion.

COMMISSIONER: I would like to get on the record what articles we are talking about.

MR. MARRECO: D-913 and D-914.

COMMISSIONER: I am much obliged to you.

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q. Can you declare here, according to your best knowledge and with a clear conscience that the situation as described in these articles does not correspond to the actual situation as it was found in the NS Reiterkorps?

A. The description of these articles does not in any way correspond to the actual facts. The content for an expert appears ridiculous.

COMMISSIONER: When did you see these articles?

BY THE WITNESS:

A. I saw them the day before yesterday.

Q. As a leader of the NS Reiterkorps, were you ever entrusted with secret military matters?

A. I never was entrusted with secret military matters.

Q. You mean in your capacity as Group Reiterkorps Leader, because I want to point out here that during war time you were a soldier?

A. Yes, of course.

MR. MARRECO: It is a quarter to five. I hope Dr. Loeffler is going to give me some time to cross-examine before we adjourn.

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DR. LOEFFLER: I will be through soon.

COMMISSIONER: Have you any more questions?

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q. One or two. Witness, have you ever been given the impression that the general SA was a criminal organization, as maintained by the Prosecution?

A. I have never had that impression.

Q. But you know that excesses have been commited by the general SA. In your opinion did the leadership of the SA approve or disapprove of such excesses? We speak here of the time after 1933.

A. Such excesses seem possible to me in such an organization of millions; however, the SA leadership has put them under sentence and penalized them.

DR. LOEFFLER: No further questions.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. MARRECO:

Q. Can you tell me if Litzmann is still alive?

A. I don't know.

Q. What age was he?

A. I should say in his late 40's.

Q. Was he a professional soldier?

A. As far as I know, he was a professional soldier during the World War.

Q. Was he a prfessional cavalryman?

A. Yes, I believe he was in the cavalry.

Q. Was he a member of the SA before 1933?

A. I don't know. I don't believe so.

Q. Why was Litzmann chosen to take charge of the NS Reiterkorps when it was incorporated into the SA?

A. I believe that Litzmann was chosen because he was the son of General Litzmann, a well known National Socialist.

Q. So Litzmann was chosen because he was an expert in cavalry training and the son of a prominent National Socialist?

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A. In no case was he picked out becuase he was a cavalry expert. He was a horse-breeder in East Prussia.

Q. You spoke of cart horses with insufficient bridles and saddles. Did you and your friends ride cart horses with insufficient bridles and saddles?

A. My rider storms all had to ride on insufficient horses and with insufficient bridles and saddles.

Q. But I take it that you are a country genetleman of some means. Surely you are not telling this Commission that you generally mount yourself on cart horses with inadequate saddles?

A. The leaders themselves who had horses at their disposal, as for instance myself as a horse breeder, usually had better horses.

Q. Generally, as a unit, I take it that the NS Reiterkorps took a horseman's pride in its turn-out?

A. There was, however, a lack of money and means to equip the horses in such a way as to have been enjoyed by farmer boys.

Q. Have the seen the photographs of the NS Reiterkorps' activities which the Defense Counsel has put into evidence?

A. I saw some of them.

Q. Those photographs show extremely good looking horses jumping in competitions and they show members of the NS Reiterkorps going hunting. In view of those photograph, isn't it rather nonsense to talk about the Reiterkorps mounted on cart horses with insufficient bridles and saddles?

A. By far the largest part of our members had plough horses. However, we did have sportsmen who took part in competitions and so had the necessary horse material.

Q. What would you say was the total strength of the NS Reiterkorps in Germany in general?

A. 200,000 at the largest.

Q. We heard about 90% of the members owned their own horses. Will you agree to that estimate?

A. No, we did not have so many horses. It depended upon the

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areas. as it differed. Of course, in horse breeding areas there were more horses available than in those areas where there was not so much horse breeding.

Q. What would you put the percentage at throughout Germany?

A. It is very difficult to answer, because it differs too much in the different areas.

Q. A credible witness has told us that it was as high as 90% of horses owned.

A. I believe this estimate is too high.

DR. LOEFFLER: Perhaps it will help to clarify the situation if you state the witness comes from Traminy, which is definitely a horse breeding area.

BY MR. MARRECO:

Q. Whether it was 90 per cent or not, members of the NS Reiterkorps owned about 150,000 horses.

A. Since I am under oath I do not care to answer this question at this time.

Q. In order to mount 200,000 men you would have to have at least 150,000 horses.

A. In the first place we could only ride on Sundays since, during the week the horses were ploughing and during harvest time we could not ride at all.

Q. Now look here, witness. You know as well as I do one doesn't on a Sunday ride a cart horse that has been ploughin all week You can't expect us to believe that the Reiterkorps were mounted on cart horses.

A. I regret to be able to testify under oath only to the fact.

Q. What heppened to all the Reiterkorps horses at the out-break of the war?

A. There were very few Reiterkorps horses proper, and the horses of the farmers partly were used, and partly they were drafted into the Wehrmacht.

Q. You know witness, this evidence is very contradictory to previous evidence that this Commission has heard. I just want to ask you about the articles in SA Fuhrer. Would it surprise you to hear that the

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editor of the SA Fuhrer has told this Commission that these articles were widely read by members of the Reiterkorps, and they appeared to provoke just those discussion and correspondence among the Reiterkorps members that they were intended to provoke?

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A I readily believe that the author of the articles wanted to provoke a discussion but neither the SA Mann nor the SA Fuehrer was widely read in the Reiterkorps.

Q The editor of the SA Fuehrer has told us that when these articles appeared, he received many letters from members of the Reiterkorps not protesting that they were a complete misrepresentation of Reiterkorps activities but joining in a general discussion of the ideas put forward in the articles.

A It is quite possible that individual members of the Reiterkorps have read these articles and wrote to the editor about them. However, in my group it wasn't read very much and I myself and my group have not read all of these articles.

Q Just listen to the last words of the last article: "And another thing, our men are later to become wide-awake, ingenious, useful soldiers, and the more independance to think and act they already bring with them, the more pleased the Armed Forces will be to see them, and the greater will the esteem be in which the Armed Forces hold the SA. By working along these lines we are therefore also working for a great and glorious SA."

COMMISSIONER: It is after five o'clock.

MR. MARRECO: I have one more question.

COMMISSIONER: We will let you finish then.

BY MR. MARRECCO:

Q If these articles and these words did give a true picture of the SA Reiterkorps activities, it would undoubtely show, would it not, that the Reiterkorps were engaged in pre-military training?

A Both of these articles contained such utter nonsense that one cannot take them seriously. I can only say that the facts are completely misrepresented in these articles.

Q That is not quite the answer to my question. My question was, if these articles were a true representation of Reiterkorps activities, and it may well be that the prosecution can prove that they were, then without doubt, the Reiterkorps was a pre-military training organization?

DR. LOEFFLER: I object to this question. The witness stated clearly that these articles are utter nonsense. Further, he had stated that

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these articles had nothing to do with the facts as they were. Consequently, I consider this question non-permissible which asks, if these reports were correct, what would be the case?

MR. MARRECO: I think it is, sir, quite unnecessary for Dr. Loeffler to make a speech in the middle of my cross-examination. If the witness does not want to answer my question, it is perfectly all right.

COMMISSIONER: DR. Loeffler has the right to object to a question. I think this question is perfectly permissible. It can be answered by "yes" or "no". It is the same as sayif that table is brown, do you agree that it cannot be green? Now will you answer this question "yes" or "no"?

BY THE WITNESS:

A May I ask the question to be repeated?

COMMISSIONER: I will ask the question. The question was, if the articles had been true, would it prove that the Reiterkorps was a pre-military training establishment. It is easy to answer "yes" or "no".

BY THE WITNESS:

A Then I cannot consider it true.

COMMISSIONER: I am not asking you whether it is true. I am asking you, if it is true, whether that proves as the prosecution says, that it was a pre-military training school.

BY THE WITNESS:

A Even then, it would have been no pre-military training organization.

COMMISSIONER: Very well, that is the answer. Is there any more cross examination by the Russian Prosecution?

COL. KAREV: No.

COMMISSIONER: Is there any re-examination by Defense Counsel?

BY DR. LOEFFLER: I have only one question and one statement. I want to say that the pictures which the prosecution referred to emanated from urban Reiter Associations. They were actually jumpers and horses for competitions but we have heard that 80 to 90 per cent of the Reiterkorps were not urban but rural farmers.

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MR. MARRECO: Am I entitled to state that some of these pictures showd some of the Reiterkorps fox hunting, which they couldn't do in town?

BY DR. LOEFFLER: May I ask thewitnesswhether they were particularly the urban Reiter Associations who had at least one or two hunts annually?

A The urban Reiter Associations rode to hunt every fall.

Q This is my last question. Taking into consideration the way in which propaganda articles were published during the 12 years of the Nazi regime in Germany, about all athletic activities, as for instance, football, swimming, boxing, tennis, etc., would one not be justified in saying that these articles contained something like: "This sport also produces new and cleverer soldiers for the Fuehrer". What I want to ask is, weren't such articles published and didn't any one think of protesting against these articles because they were too silly and too ridiculous.

A I think the same thing is true no matter whether you talk of any other sport or just the horseback riding.

COMMISSIONER: The witness didn't quite understand the question.

BY DR. LOEFFLER:

Q Isn't it correct that no one thought it worthwhile to protest against such articles because we in Germany knew they were only silly propaganda articles which did not make it worthwhile to object to them?

A That is so.

Q No further questions.

COMMISSIONER: The witness may retire. We will meet tomorrow morning at 1000 hours.

(The Commission adjourned at 1715 hours)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of KARL OTTO VON DER BORCH, taken on 9 July 1946.

Marjorie Shumway
Reporter

CERTIFIED TO:

I. D. McIlwraith
Commissioner